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AUTHOR Camarillo, Albert
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ABSTRACT

The essay discusses seminal contributions to the field of "new" Chicano history of the 1970's which focused on urban themes, labor and the working class, and women and were produced by a young, formally trained corps of historians (some Latin American, but increasingly United States historians), principally from the major universities of the Southwest, who asked new questions as they analyzed standard interpretations and previously unsubstantiated theses. Publications assessed included historiographic review articles by Arthur Corwin, Juxn Gomez-Quinones, and Luis Arroyo and general Chicano history texts by Carey McWilliams ("North from Mexico") and Rodolfo Acuna ("Occupied America"). Among the four categories of studies analyzed are community studies, studies of the working class and urban occupational structure, institutional and political studies, and studies on the conceptualization or analysis of Chicano urban history. Key anthologies exploring the reality of Chicanas within the Mexican community and larger society are identified. Several period studies covering the 19th and 20th centuries are noted. This review suggests that the prognosis for the continuing development of new Chicano history is excellent if working historians remain on the cutting edge of research and are innovative in their interpretations, conceptualizations, and methodological approaches. (NEC)

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The writings of George I. Sánchez, Carey McWilliams, Carlos Castañeda, Ernesto Galarza, Paul Taylor, and Américo Paredes have become the "classics" of Chicano studies. The contributions of these authors and a few other writers constitute a body of literature--for the most part written by scholars who were not formally trained historians and who worked in isolation of one another--that laid the foundations for publications in Chicano studies beginning in the 1960s. Though the late 1960s produced some notable contributions to Chicano studies literature, it was not until the next decade that the "new" Chicano history emerges.

To refer to a "new" Chicano history is actually a misnomer, for no discernible "old" Chicano history existed before the late 1960s. But one can justify the use of the term in as much as the historiography of the 1970s significantly departs from the earlier literature both in content and context. The older literature, of course, provided the background and rudimentary analyses and interpretations for many of the recent publications. The new Chicano history of the 1970s, however, reflects more the influences of the "new" social history of the United States which dates from the 1960s. Chicano historical writings which have focused on urban themes, on labor and the working class, on women, and on a number of other topics are clearly the products of more recent trends in American historiography--the "new" urban history, the "new" labor history, women's history, etc.

The new Chicano history also departs from the older publications in other fundamental ways. The historical publications of the past decade were produced largely by a group of young, formally trained corps of historians (some Latin Americans, but increasingly U.S. historians). In

addition, this small network of Chicano historians, principally from the major universities of the Southwest, began asking new questions as they analyzed standard interpretations and previously unsubstantiated theses. Revisionistic in their approaches, these historians experimented with newer methodologies and posited alternative interpretations to guide their historical analyses. Thus, the new Chicano history of the 1970s signaled the maturation of a young, but growing field of study whose importance has been acknowledged, on the one hand, by its incorporation into the structure of most university departments of history in the Southwest and, on the other hand, by the ongoing training of Ph.D.s.

Due to the publication of hundreds of articles and books in Chicano history during the 1970s, this essay focuses only on those seminal contributions to the field. The published studies identified in this paper represent works which have significantly shaped the course and content of the new Chicano history. These selected publications have not only influenced research directions, but have served as interpretative and methodological models in many cases. Discussion of these publications is herein organized topically, thematically and chronologically. Since other colleagues are surveying the literature on labor, politics, immigration, and anthropological studies, this essay deals specifically with the themes of urban, institutional, and Chicana history. Further discussion of the historiography may be divided by focusing on nineteenth century studies, twentieth century studies and historical overviews. Within these broad divisions of the new Chicano history four types of publications will be assessed: (1) articles, both

thematic and historiographic (2) anthologies and original research collections (3) texts and (4) monographs.

An appropriate place to begin any discussion of the new Chicano history is with historiographical essays. More than a dozen review articles were published during the 1970s, but only three are noteworthy: Juan Gómez-Quiñones' article entitled "Toward a Perspective on Chicano History" published in Aztlán (Fall 1971), Arthur F. Corwin's "Mexican American History: An Assessment" which appeared in the Pacific Historical Review (August 1973), and Gómez-Quiñones and Luis Arroyo's co-authored essay "On the State of Chicano History: Observations on its Development, Interpretations, and Theory, 1970-1974" (Western Historical Quarterly, April 1976). The first essay by Gómez-Quiñones was a benchmark publication for the new Chicano history. It systematically reviewed the existing literature, but even more importantly, it conceptualized the field by offering a historical periodization and by suggesting approaches and methods of study. This seminal essay laid the groundwork for much of the research that followed during the next five years. The 1973 article by Corwin, though an impressive survey of the literature, failed to have a significant impact on the direction of the field. The Corwin essay reflected a misinformed and naive understanding of the major developments taking place in the field during the early 1970s. The last historiographic essay worth noting is the co-authored publication by Gómez-Quiñones and Arroyo. This article updates the literature review and assesses the field in a positive light. The authors see a vitality and innovative thrust in the development of Chicano history by mid-decade. The writing of many dissertations and the increasing publication

of articles, anthologies, monographs, and bibliographies allowed the authors to present an optimistic appraisal of the state of the field.

In addition to the publication of many historiographical essays during the early 1970s, several general texts were released. Most of these historical overviews were rushed into print so as to capitalize on a growing interested audience. As a result, most of these Chicano history texts are overly impressionistic and do not push analyses or interpretations much beyond that examined by Carey McWilliam's North From Mexico first published in 1948. The one exception is the text by Rodolfo Acuña, Occupied America (1972). Though criticized for its lack of original research and, even more so, for its inconsistent use of the theoretical model of internal colonialism, Occupied America highlighted many salient themes of the Chicano historical reality. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the text is its widespread adoption and popularization of Chicano history. Interestingly, a second-revised edition released in 1981 abandons the internal colonial framework and substantially strengthens the original research of the book. Occupied America will most likely remain the most often used text for Chicano history courses.

The best yardstick for measuring the growth of the new Chicano history is not by the publication of texts, but rather by the production of thematic or topical studies. Studies in Chicano urban history, for example, form a large part of the literature in this new field. Consequently, by reviewing this literature one can gain an understanding of the types of questions Chicano historians have posed, their topical and thematic approaches, and their analyses of historical problems.

Perhaps the most efficient manner in which to present a synopsis of Chicano urban studies is to combine the thematic/topical approaches with the chronological and geographical. But before discussing the four identifiable categories for analyzing Chicano urban historical studies, some general observations as to their placement in time and space are worthwhile. The majority of Chicano urban studies focus on the late 1800s and particularly the early twentieth century. Studies for the period after World War II are noticeably lacking as are studies for the period prior to about 1880. Local history predominates as the focus of this literature though comparative urban analyses are beginning to emerge. From the state and regional perspectives, California is perhaps the most studied with Texas close behind, the Southwest, for obvious reasons, is the regional focus point while the Midwest and Great Lakes regions are beginning to attract serious attention by scholars.

In analyzing the many publications in Chicano urban history during the 1970s, there are four categories in which one can place most of these studies. Though overlap with one or more categories is common, the following divisions are evident in the literature: (1) community studies; (2) studies of the working class and urban occupational structure; (3) institutional and political studies; and (4) studies on the conceptualization or analysis of Chicano urban history.

Community studies form the backbone of recent Chicano urban history. Characteristically, most urban community case studies analyze such phenomena as patterns of work and residence, ethnic social and cultural life, family structure, and political participation. Most of these urban barrio histories focus on the period between 1850 and 1930. For the

nineteenth century, for example, Richard Griswold del Castillo's The Los Angeles Barrio 1850-1890--A Social History (1979) incorporates many of the aforementioned characteristics in its analysis. There are other community studies that bridge both centuries. Among them is the recently published book by Mario Garcia entitled Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920, (1981) and my own study Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930 (1979). A border city study that traces the parallel history to El Paso is Oscar Martinez's Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juarez, 1880-1970 (1975).

A second grouping within Chicano urban history, though incorporated into many community studies but often analyzed separately, is the study of the working class and occupational structure. These studies commonly analyze: (1) the occupational distribution and mobility of Chicano workers; (2) the impact of urbanization and industrialization on Mexican workers, both foreign and native born; and (3) the incorporation and integration of Chicanos into the urban labor market. Studies that analyze occupational mobility, for example, include the article by Ricardo Romo, "Work and Restlessness: Occupational and Spatial Mobility of Mexicanos in Los Angeles, 1918-1928" (Pacific Historical Review, May 1977) and the aforementioned studies by Griswold del Castillo, Garcia, and Camarillo. Other notable studies of the urban Chicano working class include the essay by Juan Gómez-Quiñones, "The Origins and Development of the Mexican Working Class in the United States: Laborers and Artisans North of the Rio Bravo, 1600-1900," in Elsa C. Frost, et al., El trabajo y los trabajadores en la historia de Mexico (1979) and the historical

synthesis by Mario Barrera in his book Race and Class in the Southwest (1979). Though not a historian, Barrera is noteworthy for he summarizes much of the literature on the Chicano working class in developing a theory of racial inequality--the internal colonial model in this case.

Some of the literature that focuses on the urban theme, though not exclusively, constitutes another identifiable grouping of Chicano historical writings. This small, but growing body of literature may be labeled institutional and political history. A major part of the institutional studies treat labor unionization and labor conflict both in the rural and urban context. Discussion of these studies are discussed by Juan Gómez-Quiñones and Luis Arroyo in their survey of Chicano labor studies.

Beyond those studies which focus on labor unionization, there is a body of other institutional histories that defy broad categorization. To provide some idea as to the diversity of these studies, the following serve as examples: Abraham Hoffman's study of the federal government's deportation drive against Mexicans during the 1930s (Unwanted Mexican Americans: Repatriation Pressures During the Great Depression, 1974); Francisco Balderama's forthcoming book which describes the role of the Mexican consulate office in Los Angeles during the 1930s (In Defense of La Raza: The Los Angeles Mexican Consulate and the Mexican Community); Lawrence Cardoso's overview of immigration from Mexico (Mexican Emigration to the U. S., 1890-1932, 1979); Juan Gómez-Quiñones' study of the political revolutionary activities, in cities in the Southwest, of Mexican exile Ricardo Flores Magón and his Partido Liberal Mexicano (Sembradores, 1973) and his study of the Chicano student movement in

Southern California (Mexican Students Por La Raza, 1978). These books merely represent some of the many different types of institutional studies that have emerged during the past decade and which continue to grow in volume.

An additional subgrouping of publications in the new Chicano history is beginning to explore the reality of Chicanas within the Mexican community and larger society. In recent years several key anthologies have contributed to the expansion and direction of Chicana studies. Noteworthy is Magdalena Mora and Adelaida R. del Castillo's Mexican Women in the United States: struggles past and present (1980) which offers several good historical articles. Similarly, Essays on La Mujer (1977) edited by Rosaura Sánchez and Rosa Martinez Cruz also include some important historical essays. Yet, what is lacking in the historiography are publications that will help further conceptualize, periodize, and contribute baseline information on Chicana history. Such recent contributions as Women at Farah: An Unifinished Story (Laurie Coyle, et al., 1979), Mario Garcia's article "The Chicana in American History: The Mexican Women of El Paso, 1880-1920: A Case Study" (Pacific Historical Review, May 1980), and Alfredo Mirandé and Evangelina Enriquez' La Chicana: The Mexican American Woman (1979) are attempts in the right direction (the latter study is not a historical study and is, therefore, uneven in its portrayal of Chicanas in society over time).

Though the best of the new Chicano history is embodied in thematic and topical studies, several period studies are worth noting. The nineteenth century, for example, is beginning to be examined more systematically by those who consider this century as the crucible of the

Chicano experience. Publications such as David J. Weber's Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans (1973), Leonard Pitt's The Decline of the Californios (1966), and Richard Griswold del Castillo's, The Los Angeles Barrio 1850-1890 have all contributed to a further understanding of nineteenth-century experiences.

Period studies that bridge both centuries, primarily from 1870 to 1930, include Camarillo's extended essay "Historical Patterns in the Development of Chicano Urban Society: Southern California, 1848-1930" (UCLA, Clark Memorial Library Publications, 1979), and the previously cited studies by Mario Garcia, Juan Gómez-Quinones, and Mario Barrera. Specifically for the twentieth century, most period studies seldom extend beyond 1940; for example, Ricardo Romo's article "The Urbanization of Southwestern Chicanos in the Early Twentieth Century" (New Scholar, 1977), Lawrence Cardoso's Mexican Emigration to the U.S. and Juan Gómez-Quiñones' article entitled "The First Steps: Chicano Labor Conflict and Organizing, 1900-1920" (Aztlán, Spring 1972).

One of the few recent attempts to synthesize the whole of Chicano history is the admirable essay by Carlos Cortes published recently in the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups (1980). The need for synthesis of the literature will become more imperative in the future as more period and thematic studies in Chicano history are published.

The prognosis for the continuing development of the new Chicano history is excellent. A small, but critical mass of historians--composed of young middle career scholars, new Ph.D.s and graduate students--are on the threshold of making fundamental contributions to knowledge about Chicanos. The task that lays ahead is, however, a formidable one indeed.

The existing publications have only scratched the surface of historical understanding and the generation of scholarship to come will form the basis of knowledge for many future generations. But for the new Chicano history to be accorded its rightful place in academia and to have the optimum effect of accurately conveying the past and present reality of the Chicano people, working historians must remain on the cutting edge of research, and must be innovative in their interpretations, conceptualizations, and methodological approaches. The challenge of sustaining the initial momentum of the new Chicano history of the 1970s will be determined by the success of publication of new studies during the 1980s.

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